

# *Twin City Iris Society*

NEWS & VIEWS

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There is one event that is as much a harbinger of spring as the coming of the first robin to members of the Twin City Iris Society, that is, the annual Spring Pot Luck Supper of the Twin City Iris Society - and it's coming!! The date - - Thursday, March 24, 1960 at 6:30 P.M. The place - St. Leo's Church, 850 South Wilder, St. Paul. The purpose - to provide an evening of good fellowship, good food and fun for members and friends of the Twin City Iris Society. The women will furnish all manner of delectable food and the men will contribute \$1.00 for the privilege of eating same. Mrs. Dale, our hospitality chairman, has sent out cards to all women members telling them what to bring, but in case, inadvertently, you have been missed, call Mrs. Milton Dale at SU. 4-8160 and she will tell you what you can add to the list of goodies. St. Leo's is easy to find as it is in the Highland Park area, just a block from The Ford Parkway and is behind the Red Owl Store in the Highland Park Shopping Center. Those from Minneapolis can cross the Ford bridge and continue to the Red Owl store, turn right at the next street and there is St. Leo's. There is ample parking space on the west side of the building and we enter at the southwest corner of the building. Most of you have been there, but I don't think any of you will have trouble finding it. Vern Landley has an informative and interesting program planned that will be of interest to all. We are very anxious to have a large turnout so we hope everyone will come.

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Mr. Gable reports that he has received no questions for his question and answer column. I'm sure we don't all know all the answers so come on with the questions. Either bring them to the next meeting or send to Mr. G. B. Gable, 2543 - 38th Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Mr. Gable just returned from a trip to Omaha and reported a great deal of snow in Omaha and all to the south of us. He said it was like coming to another world to come back to Minneapolis. He is greatly encouraged about the moisture situation and feels that the snow we have had will be sufficient to ensure enough moisture when the frost comes out of the ground to keep from causing much damage to our rhizomes. By time for the next News & Views spring will really be here so he would like to have those questions in time for the answers to help you.

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A FLOWER OF THE BIBLE: Loren V. Franklin

This being the lenten season I thought it might be interesting to trace the history of the iris from its place in antiquity as a religious flower down to the present time.

(Continued . .)

## A FLOWER OF THE BIBLE (Continued)

To quote from Buckner Hollingsworth, a writer of flower chronicles, the iris is a "namesake of a goddess; symbol of a bronze age religion; heraldic device of the kings of France; "sovereign" remedy for a vast number of ailments from weak eyes to insanity; flavor for various beverages, hard and soft; basis for countless perfumes and powders; ornament of our gardens. The Who's Who item of the iris is a long and distinguished one."

Iris, of course, was the messenger of the Greek gods and was supposed to lead the souls of their dead women to the Elysian Fields, and so the Greeks planted purple iris on the graves of their women. History does not record if the flower was named for the Greek Goddess or the Goddess for the flower.

About 2,000 years before the birth of Christ the first painting of an iris plant appeared on the wall of a Minoan palace in Crete in a modeling of their version of the Elysian Fields. It was a likeness of the same specie which grows in that same area at the present time and has been identified as *I. reticulata*.

At a slightly later date we find the iris in Egypt carved in stone, labeled by Thutmosis III as being brought from Syria after conquest of a vast area of Asia Minor. It was identified by W. R. Dykes as *I. oncocyclus*.

Although *I. germanica* and other species are mentioned in medical articles during the Roman supremacy, history does not record how the iris got to France to become the fleur-de-lis of France, a national emblem and a symbol of the religious crusades; a conventionalized device of the iris was on the banners carried by the crusaders and the battle cry was "charge for the golden lilies and the glory of France."

As previously mentioned, articles on the medical use of iris were written by the "Rhizotomi" as the early druggists were called, and contained many recipes and concoctions for various ailments. Some considered that the rhizomes had to be dug in a certain way and with prayer and the awful medicines administered in the same way. It continued to be used as medicine down through the ages almost to the present day as was our own blue flag *I. versicolor*.

If you have tried to burn your diseased iris roots you probably noticed the sweet pungent odor given off. This was probably the first use of it in that category; as a burnt offering to the gods. Later perfume was distilled from the rhizomes and found to have the odor of the violet rather than that of the iris. It has been used ever since in powders and perfumes until just recently when cheaper synthetics have mostly taken its place.

The ground up rhizomes were also used to make a white perfumed powder used to whiten the wigs and coiffures worn in the 18th Century. Milady of that period attended church with pulverized iris rhizomes on her hair and iris perfume on her dresses. In more recent years only the perfume scented the places of worship.

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A FLOWER OF THE BIBLE (Continued)

Modern science and chemistry has produced medicines that really heal and perfumes that can be produced in quantity more cheaply taking the iris out of those roles. It is now an ornament for our gardens with no religious significance except for those of us who grow it and love it, softening our hearts and bringing us closer to God.

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Royal Longhenry, father of Twin City Iris Society Member Robert Longhenry, passed away recently. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to Bob and his family at this time.

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THE TALL AND DWARF OF IT

Nobody but nobody sent in any news to Mrs. Ipsen for this department this month. When I got her S.O.S. she told me she had been flat on her back with a bad case of the flu, and all the family had been down with it. She hoped she would recover quickly now as their son Jay was coming home Friday from his tour of duty with the Army and would go back to his old job until he could get into electronics for which he received training while in service. She confided to me that he is planning to marry a nurse who has a very find executive job in a hospital. It's just barely possible that he might not need a job after all?!

Nobody sent in any account of how many of our fisherman members failed to get their fish houses off the ice on schedule and had them burned by the authorities.

Mrs. Hanratty didn't report that her car sunk through the ice in trying to retrieve their fish house.

Mrs. Gowen didn't report that her greenhouse froze up during the cold spell and ruined everything. No, they didn't report it so we guess it really didn't happen.

The Klapotz didn't say either, if or how many iris they had growing in their greenhouses. They might have some Easter blooms.

Alice Foss showed slides of her recent trip at our last meeting but she hasn't called to say if she had lost the poundage gained due to the wonderful cuisine served on the trip. Rumor has it that she is to be married. A little bird from the mineral club told me. It sounded just like the song sparrow on a bare tree top in our back yard yesterday, tweet, tweet, rumor, rumor.

The Sindts who live way out in the sticks east of our capital city didn't call to inform us that their son, David, was home on vacation from the scholarship course he is taking in horticulture.

I haven't heard from Herb Kahlert but from a Star Journal item

THE TALL AND DWARF OF IT (Continued)

we learn that he was honored by the Men's Garden Club as an old timer and charter member of that organization.

No word from the Burns! We can't believe that groceries and gasoline have entirely destroyed their love for the iris. We miss those flavorful articles too, that used to be a part of the NEWS & VIEWS.

I saw Vern Landey a few days ago but he didn't say a word about the terrible rush of spring business. Spring is just about here and nobody has called to report the first robin.

The news is Dwarf  
The tales are Tall  
So come to the meeting  
and tell us All.

L.V.F. pinch hitting for Betty Ipsen